

LETTER: By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish

Nelson Star

June 3, 2017 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2017 Black Press All Rights Reserved

Section: OPINION

Length: 276 words

Byline: Bill Metcalfe

Body

June 5 marks the United Nations World Environment Day, a day set aside since 1974 for celebrating our natural environment and creating of awareness of global environmental issues.

We who love the earth are dismayed by the obvious damage we're doing to the biosphere - from climate change to water and air pollution to swirling plastic patches in the oceans. We can and must cut down on fossil fuels and plastics.

Some 18 tonnes of plastic garbage - 239 items per square metre - have been found scattered across a small South Pacific island 5,000 kilometres from the nearest human occupation. Scientists have also found massive, swirling patches of plastic in the North and South Pacific oceans, each holding around 400,000 plastic particles per square kilometre.

Globally, only 14 percent of plastics are collected for recycling, according to the World Economic Forum. Forty percent end up in landfills, and thirty-two percent are "leaked" into the environment, including the coastal waters here in BC. The prediction is that by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish, assuming fish stocks remain constant

We do have ways to prevent plastics from ending up in our oceans. As with fossil fuels, the first step to addressing the problem is to substantially reduce plastics usage. There are alternatives! Why not produce plastics from renewable resources, such as hemp, or any fast-growing plant that contains cellulose?

In Nelson, let's stop buying plastic water bottles for any reason, and switch to glass or metal. I urge citizens to give up their plastic water bottle habit and work for a more sustainable alternative.

Sandra Hartline

KAIROS

Nelson

Load-Date: June 5, 2017